

Lawmakers Successfully Preserve Homeland Security Grants For Highest-Risk Cities

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (NY-18) and Congressman Steve Israel (NY-02) today announced a victory in ensuring homeland security funding is reserved for highest-risk regions like the New York metro area. The lawmakers passed an amendment limiting grant recipients from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), which will result in a larger share for top terror targets like NY.

“I have visited lovely small towns and rural areas across this country and appreciate their unique challenges,” said Lowey. “But New York should not lose vital prevention and preparedness funding to cities facing minimal risk. I am pleased this amendment passed to ensure UASI grants benefit highest-risk cities and will work to ensure the Senate passes this provision and President Obama signs it into law.

“Federal homeland security formulas give too much to localities that don't need it and too little to those that are true targets,” said Israel. “The amendment Nita Lowey and I offered corrects that. I'm pleased that we were able to work in a bipartisan manner to ensure this amendment was adopted.”

The Urban Area Security Initiative was created to help secure the highest-risk cities and began with just seven recipients. In recent years, it has ballooned to include 64 cities, diluting the share for top terror targets like New York City. The amendment proposed by Lowey and Israel and approved Thursday by the House of Representatives would limit the number of cities benefiting from the grants to 25, resulting in a larger share for the highest-risk cities.

The Continuing Resolution being debated in the House of Representatives would slash overall UASI funding by \$87 million, which could cut New York City's allocation by \$10-15 million. The amendment passed by Lowey and Israel would protect New York City's allocation.

“Homeland Security funds to combat terrorism are too important to be spread around the country without taking risk into account,” said Mayor Michael Bloomberg. “We have long argued that the money needs to be allocated based on threats so that frequently targeted cities like New York get the vitally important resources needed to prevent attacks. I would like to thank Congresswoman Lowey and Congressman Israel for offering this amendment and am extremely grateful for its passage.”

“In reducing the number of eligible cities, the legislation facilitates the common sense application of scarce resources to where the threat is greatest,” said Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly.